(b) The losses suffered by the Gujarat and Maharashtra units of NTC are due to inadequate modernisation, obsolete machinery, excess man-power, shortage of working capital, etc.

(c) Government have approved a revised Turn Around Strategy for all the NTC mills (including those in Gujarat and Maharashtra) involving modernisation of 79 mills at a cost of Rs. 2005.72 crores, restructuring of 36 unviable mills into 18 viable mills etc. Government have also nationalised the 15 mills, (13 in Bombay and 2 in Kanpur) whose management was taken over earlier by an Ordinance promulgated by the President on 27.6.95 to facilitate modernisation of these taken over mills also. Since 8 out of 9 subsidiaries of NTC have been referred to and declared sick by the BIFR, the revised Turn Around Strategy has been placed before the BIFR for its approval. The implementation of the Turn Around Plan will make the NTC mills viable.

Duty on Import of Agricultural Machinery

1994. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the duty imposed on the import of agricultural machinery and other inputs; item-wise details; and

(b) whether duty on import of such items will be scrapped following the liberalization policy of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The basic customs duty leviable on agricultural machinery and machineries used in horticulture and forestry sector is 25% ad valorem.

(b) The tariff rates are normally fixed keeping in view, *inter-alia*, the broad policy thrust of the Government and changes in duty structure are usually considered during the budget.

Proposal to open Tezpur-Bhalukpung-Bomdilla-Tawang Sector for Foreign Tourists

1995. SHRI BHADRESWAR BURAGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal with Government to open the Tezpur-Bhalukpung-Bomdilla-Tawang sector in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh for foreign tourists;

(b) whether Government are aware that Tawang monastery has the largest Buddhist Library in Asia with rare Budhist manuscripts which can attract largest number of Buddhist and pilgrim tourists from Asian countries;

(c) if so, whether the Ministry has discussed the matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Defence Ministry to open this sector in view of the strategic position of the area; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Tawang Monastery possesses rare Buddhist manuscripts including certain volumes written in gold which are a great source of attraction to foreign tourists and Buddhist pilgrims.

(c) and (d) Vide Notification No. 450(E) dated 19th May, 1995 the Ministry of Home Affairs have lifted the Restricted Area Permit for the States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. As regards the areas falling within Arunachal Pradesh, the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh proposes to request the Government of India to open the Bhalukpong - Bomdilla - Dirang - Tawang Circuit for foreign tourists at the Conference of the Tourism Ministers' of the North-Eastern States to be held in September 1995.